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Examiners' Report January 2011

GCSE History 5HA02 2B

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Introduction

Whilst it is the case that some candidates find this period of Russian history a challenging one, there were many high quality answers and centres have obviously worked hard with their students to give them an in-depth understanding of both the question types and the approach needed in answering them. Where candidates may need a little more development is in accessing the top levels, particularly in the later questions on the paper.

The following general comments may assist.

On Questions 1c, 2 and to some extent 1d, the key to gaining top marks is to see the 'big picture', to give an overview or to prioritise. All of these approaches are an integral part of explanation. So in 1c candidates need to show how Lenin's return had a long-term impact beyond that created by the April Theses and the July Days. In 1d they ought to consider whether any of the reasons for agreeing to the treaty is more important than others, or are they all closely inter-related?; in Questions 2a and 2b (as in Question 1c) they should be looking for 'the big picture'. Candidates are very good at giving detail, but what is the significance of this detail?

Question 3 remains an area where there is room for improvement in many scripts and some generic advice may prove of benefit.

Four bullet points are given and candidates should explain why these (or other factors) contributed to the given outcome (in this case, Bolshevik success or modernisation under Stalin). But such an approach will get candidates only to the bottom of Level 3. To score highest marks, the answer must compare the relative importance of a number of factors. In trying to do this many candidates asserted that one factor was the most important because it was very important. Such an approach is flawed. Comparison must involve an analysis of at least two factors.

Question 1(a)

This first question caused little difficulties for most candidates. The source provided various options for making inferences. Some candidates pointed out that Stalin supported the regions; others that he opposed them. Perhaps the most incisive comments were those that talked of how Stalin's attitude changed after the early 1930s. There were few examples of candidates copying or paraphrasing the source, though a number of candidates made inferences about Stalin and his use of propaganda, rather than his attitude towards the ethnic minorities.

The example scores full marks by establishing the change from positive to negative

Russia, 1917–39

Answer Questions 1(a) to (d), then Question 2(a) OR 2(b) and then Question 3(a) OR 3(b).

Question 1 – you must answer all parts of this question.

Study Source A.

Source A: From a history of Russia, published in 2009.

Stalin's propaganda stressed the equality of the republics of the Soviet Union. Posters and photos often showed him with people from these regions in their national dress. Until the early 1930s, the state gave support to local languages. But during enforced collectivisation, the greatest opposition came from the regions, which were heavily purged. From 1932, Stalin saw support for the regional identity of the ethnic minorities as anti-communist.

(a) What can you learn from Source A about Stalin's attitude towards the ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union?

(4)

towards the ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union ~~changed~~ was a positive one. We know this because it says he "stressed the equality" meaning his attitude towards the ethnic minorities was the same attitude he gave to everyone in the Soviet Union. ~~His~~ His attitude changed in the early 1930's because these ~~best~~ ethnic minorities opposed to his plan of enforced collectivisation which was meant to help all people in the Soviet Union; this changed his attitude as he thought they were going against his target, communism.



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Examiner Comments

The answer begins with the inference ('was a positive one'), proves it then moves to the change in attitude and also supports that. This is an excellent answer.



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Examiner Tip

Be direct in your response. We don't need to have introductions or background information. Just answer the question directly.

Question 1(b)

It was surprising that candidates did not know as much about Trotsky as was expected. Question 1b is the opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their factual recall by presenting precise information on the given topic. Few candidates mentioned Trotsky's role as Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet or that he headed the Military Revolutionary Committee. Candidates were, however, stronger on Trotsky's plan for the take over of Petrograd by seizing key buildings.

The example is a little short on detail, though contains sufficient development to score in Level 2.

(b) Describe the role of Trotsky in helping the Bolsheviks seize power in 1917.

(6)

Trotsky played a major role in helping the Bolsheviks seize power in 1917. When Lenin was persuading everyone to seize power earlier, Trotsky calmed him down and persuaded him to wait until the time was right before they make a move. Also, he had organised the Red Army and over time had build them up into an influential force that was a lot stronger than the Provisional Government. Finally, Trotsky organised the final day of the revolution: he made leaflets to hand out telling people of the revolution, he drew the plans of seizing bridges, railway lines and communication and he had scared Kerensky into fleeing by doing this.



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Examiner Comments

The information on Trotsky's plans to take Petrograd is sound and clearly Level 2. Other information lacks precision.



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Examiner Tip

A good technique in this answer is to say 'one way Trotsky helped...' and 'another'. This would clearly show that separate points were being made.

Question 1(c)

As mentioned in previous reports, the focus of this question is consequence. Some candidates tended to limit their answer to details of the events of 1917, whereas what examiners were looking for was the impact of the return. Candidates would do well to consider this question as meaning ‘what difference did ... make’.

Those who took this approach argued, often convincingly, that Lenin’s return was the catalyst for the October revolution. The sending of the April Theses in advance of his return provided a ‘Bolshevik manifesto’ and Bolshevik slogans were chanted during the July Days. As the Provisional Government became more unpopular, so support for the Bolsheviks grew.

The paragraph shows a good approach to the question. The answer then goes on to provide factual support for its argument and achieves a Level 3 mark.

(c) Explain the effects of Lenin’s return to Russia in April 1917.

(8)

Lenin's return to Russia had a huge effect on Russia and the way it was run. Lenin returned to Russia in April 1917 from Finland where he had been exiled after the 'July days' and when he returned he immediately made his April Theses speech. This inspired many Bolsheviks to revolt in July because they believed that it was the right time as Lenin had returned. It was not.



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Examiner Comments

A good technique is shown. The candidate goes straight into the answer, by using the words of the question.



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Examiner Tip

On this type of question, try to see the ‘big picture’. What was the real impact of Lenin’s return?

Question 2(a)

Candidates seemed very much at ease with this question and many wrote at length on the trials and their part in the purges. Whilst there was sometimes an over-emphasis on what happened, the majority of candidates were able to provide an argument about the impact of the trials and reach either Level 2 or Level 3, depending upon the quality of the explanation. For most candidates the show trials resulted in a tightening of Stalin's control by removing opposition and frightening the Russian people; others saw a growth of respect for the government for dealing with troublesome opposition. Whilst there were those who argued that the effect was actually to diminish support as Stalin was seen to be a tyrant, worse than the old Tsar. A good explanation of any of these points resulted in a Level 3 mark.

guilty and this was recorded as well for proof. They also only lasted a few minutes, the people also confessed they were guilty. This effected the people's trust in the justice system and the political party who promised equality and fairness. Similarly, they lost their trust when when the



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Examiner Comments

This extract shows the type of judgement which follows a passage of detail and moves an answer into L3 with an analysis of the information provided.



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Examiner Tip

Remember that to answer a question on 'effects', you should try to see the 'big picture' Can you give an 'overview' here? How did the Show Trials affect attitudes to Stalin's government in general'.

Question 2(b)

This question proved less popular than 2a, but those who answered it knew the detail well. Candidates had a good understanding of the problems the war created for Russia and how the Tsar was mistaken to in his decision to take personal command. Candidates must remember, however, that Rasputin is not in the specification (though poor government in the Tsar's absence is). Best answers took an overview of the impact of the war, arguing that it destroyed faith in the Tsarist system and tarnished the image of the Tsar as father of the nation. Many candidates, however, limited their answers to the story of the events with the impact addressed 'in passing'.

This extract is an example of a Level 2 answer where the story is told, but no detailed analysis is given of the wider impact of the war. The Tsar is shown to have made mistakes and became unpopular. This answer is Level 2.

Answer EITHER Question 2(a) OR 2(b).

EITHER

2 (a) Explain how Stalin's show trials affected the Soviet Union. (8)

OR

2 (b) Explain how the First World War affected Tsarist rule in 1917. (8)

Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box.
If you change your mind, put a line through the box
and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen Question Number: Question 2(a) Question 2(b)

~~The~~ At first, the first world war was popular as ~~the~~
the capital ~~was~~ changed from St Petersburg to Petrograd.
- The soldiers ~~at~~ who were sent to war were badly equipped
and trained. This showed the Tsar as a very bad leader.
- He felt like he had to fight in the war himself, so he
went to fight and left his half-german wife in control
of the USSR. This wasn't clever as the Tsar became more
unpopular. ~~and more were protests~~ The effect of this was
the ~~1905~~ ^{February} revolution where ~~he~~ were ~~the~~ banners saying
'down with the Tsar ~~himself~~'. This forced the Tsar to abdicate.
- ~~The~~ Bringing Russia into the war in the first place was a
bad decision as it soon became unpopular.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate understands how the war affected the Tsar, but needs to look more deeply at how attitudes to the Tsarist regime changed as a result of the war.

Question 3(a)

As explained in the Introduction, many students interpret this question not as whether one of the reasons was more important than others, but simply as whether it was important in itself. As a consequence candidates often go through the four bullets and explain, with varying degrees of sophistication how each was important. Such an approach will bring reward, but the best marks are reserved for prioritising and/or linkage.

The example is the final paragraph of an answer which considers each bullet point individually, but tries to show links between them. In this final paragraph the candidate brings the argument together emphasising these links. Level 4 was awarded.

I think the most important things that kept the Bolsheviks in power between 1919 - 1924 was the victory over the whites in the Civil War caused by Trotsky's well organised troops and strategic plan, who had also been well supplied thanks to War Communism. Even though War Communism helped win them the war it did cause a ~~is~~ mutiny, so the factor which kept them in charge after the war was Lenin's NEP. So I would say the main reasons which kept allowed the Bolsheviks to maintain power is victory over the whites thanks to Trotsky and Lenin's New Economic Policy which maintained their power afterwards.

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Examiner Comments

The final paragraph shows that the candidate fully understands how reasons link together to create an outcome.

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Examiner Tip

Try to avoid leaving your analysis to the final paragraph. Answers are much stronger if you can demonstrate links or prioritise as you go through the answer. Then it is easier to draw the essay together in a final paragraph.

Question 3(b)

As with Question 3a, the key to high marks on this question lay in assessing the contribution made to modernising the Soviet Union by a number of given factors (or any others which the candidates chose to include). Most candidates wrote at length on collectivisation and industrialisation and knew much less (unsurprisingly) on education and rights for women. What determined the mark awarded was the strength of argument in deciding the degree of success and the effectiveness of any attempt to compare or prioritise. It is worth repeating here that the top 6 marks in this question cannot be accessed without a comparison of factors.

The extract is the beginning of a response which addressed the bullet points individually, but in each case assessed the degree of success. In the conclusion, there was a degree of prioritisation and the answer was marked at high Level 3. This extract exemplifies an analytical approach to the answer, rather than just 'telling the story'.

Indicate which question you are answering by marking in the box.
If you change your mind, put a line through the box
and then indicate your new question with a cross .

Chosen Question Number: Question 3(a) Question 3(b)

(It is a bold statement to say that Stalin's most successful policy in modernising ^{the USSR} ~~the USSR~~ was collectivisation, due to it still enjoying the USSR's 'backward' ways. Things needed to change for the better, and that's why it was possible to be the Union's success.

The USSR was full of small, strip farms controlled by the people, and Stalin saw this as a problem. These small farms had allowed Kiblat to be aware and they were a threat to Stalin's regime. Modernising farming was a chance to get rid of both the Kiblat and to agriculture's lack of revenue. He began 'grouping' these small farms in big state run farms where modern tools, equipment, machinery and methods would be used. So long strip farming, hello tractors! Though this rapid change led to large rebellions of people hating of their quota allocated by the state for the state. So this decision shows a good point of collectivisation, and this is mainly why to disagree with the state I have chosen to answer.



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Examiner Comments

The answer begins well. The candidate goes straight into answering the question and sets the essay up with a short and focused introduction'.



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Examiner Tip

Remember that it is good technique to make analytical comments in each paragraph, or at least about each bullet point as you go through, rather than saving it all for the last paragraph.

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